

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)**June 15, 2023**

Annual Meeting: THANK YOU!

by Rev. Kim Wood, Conference Minister

Thank you, Kirkwood United Church of Christ, for hosting the 2023 Southeast Conference Annual Meeting! The site was fantastic, the food was delicious, and the hospitality was amazing. Rev. Susannah Davis, Rev. Charmaine Penn-Johnson, and Rev. Heather Fosburgh, thank you for opening the doors wide to make way for us to gather in Atlanta. Thank you to the Tech Team, George Darr and Liam Waya, who magically made all things possible! And thank you to the local site team, led by Jean Riehl and Rev. Dave Sigmund, as well as the many volunteers who made it all look so easy while making us all feel right at home!



A huge THANK YOU to our sponsors, the Financial Ministries of the United Church of Christ: The Church Building and Loan Fund, The Cornerstone Fund, the Insurance Board, The Pension Boards, and the United Church Fund, whose generosity made it possible for Cole Arthur Riley to be Keynote Speaker for this year's Annual Meeting!

Thank you to the SECUCC Annual Meeting Planning Committee – Rev. Susannah Davis, Rev. Heather Fosburgh, Rev. Haley Lerner, Ken Love, Zena Martin (cookie-maker extraordinaire!), Minister Carrole Moss, Rev. Tom Query, Jean Riehl, Rev. Dave Sigmund, who put together an engaging and fun event! From our time-appropriate theme, IMAGINE: Renewing Self and Church, to inviting our opening worship preacher, Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown and keynote speaker Cole Arthur Riley, to all the pieces in between, you provided a vision and a plan that provided exactly what we needed in this time and space of being church together, both onsite and online.

Thank you the people who guided us throughout our plenary and worship moments! Thank you Rev. James Banks, Anna Murphy (who also created the beautiful Conference Cookies!), Rev. Susannah Davis, Rev. Myrtle Johnson, Rev. Jennifer Baker, and Micah Graham, for providing inspiring music. Thank you, Rev. Charmaine Penn-Johnson, Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown, and Kim Johnson, for serving as liturgists. Thank you, Rhonda Dunn and Rev. Will Norman, for serving as our Parliamentarians. And thank you, Rev. Richard Barham, for, for so aptly leading us through the business sessions, the pieces of our ministry together that are necessary to provide both framework and accountability as we walk faithfully in partnership together.

Thank you to our presenters and workshop leaders: Don Harris, Jonathan Parker, Rev. Helene Loper, Rev. James Pennington, Rev. Tom Query, Pastor JRae Rice-Cranford, thank you for the meaningful and timely workshops. Cindy Howell (UCC Insurance Board), Rev. Haley Lerner and Rev. Will Norman (Presbyterian Student Center, Rev. James Pennington (Back Bay Mission), and Rev. Dave Sigmund (UCC Philanthropy Team/UCC Church Building and Loan Fund), for sharing with us about your important ministries. Thank you, Michael Bowen and Rev. Jennifer Baker, for leading the Budget Hearing. Also, thank you to Rev. Char Burch for leading our Retired Clergy Boundary Training, and Kim Johnson for creating our meditation and centering spaces. Thank you, as well, to all our exhibitors, and especially Charis Books and Harrelson Press. I'm sure I have missed someone along the way. Please know that I am grateful for all the ways you made this SECUCC Annual Meeting a success.

And finally, thank you to all who were able to attend this important annual gathering of the Southeast Conference. You, your congregations and ministry settings, you are the reason we come together to build relationships and share the vision that God has set before us as the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. To God be the glory for all that we do together in Christ's holy name!





View more photos of Annual Meeting [on our website!](#)

Please Complete our Annual Meeting Survey

If you attended our Annual Meeting in Atlanta, please complete a survey so we can continue to improve our event: <https://www.secucc.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting-2023/survey/>

Annual Meeting Workshop Resources

We've posted some of the presentations from the workshops held at Annual Meeting on our website: <https://www.secucc.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting-2023/resources/>. More will be uploaded as we receive them.



New Board of Directors Elected

The new slate of officers for the Southeast Conference was elected during our Annual Meeting.

Please meet your new Board of Directors:

- Moderator: Rev. Richard Barham (Spirit of the Cross, Huntsville, AL)
- Vice Moderator: Rev. Lavern Dixon (First Congregational UCC, Atlanta, GA)
- Secretary: Emily Lin (Peace Church, Clemson SC)
- Treasurer: Michael Bowen (Covenant Community, Birmingham AL)
- Commission on Ministry: Rev. Paul Eknis-Tucker (Pilgrim UCC, Birmingham, AL)
- Nominating: Juanita Simmons (Victory for the World, Decatur, GA)
- Personnel: Rev. Emily Bel (Forgiving Heart UCC, Columbus GA)
- Stewardship & Finance: Rev. Jennifer Baker (Bethany Congregational, Thomasville GA)
- Member-At-Large: Jenna Marsh (Church of the Savior, Knoxville, TN)
- Member-At-Large: Terry Atkins (Garden of Grace, Columbia, SC)
- Member-At-Large: Rev. Larry Johnson (Union Congregational, Tugaloo MS)
- Member-At-Large: Dale Hatcher (First United, Belvidere TN)
- Member-At-Large: Denyse Thornley-Brown (Beloved Community, Birmingham AL)
- Member-At-Large: Ken Love (Sankofa UCC, Atlanta GA)

And the Nominating Committee:

- Rev. Valerie Coe Lowder (Kirkwood UCC, Atlanta, GA)
- Cynthia McMillian (Community Congregational, Montgomery, AL)
- Jody Usher (Peace Church, Clemson SC)
- Dale Wilson (United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN)

News from the Conference Office

Annual Meeting Moves to August Starting in 2024

At its June meeting, the SECUCC Board of Directors decided to set a consistent meeting weekend for the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting moving forward. It also discerned that moving the meeting out of June would be more beneficial, considering the typical holidays and activities

during that month, including Juneteenth, Pride Month, and General Synod in the years it occurs. Starting in 2024, the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting will be held annually on the third weekend of August. Please mark your calendars for our next Annual Meeting on Thursday (pre-events) – Saturday, August 15th-17th, 2024. We will be hosted by Fairfield Glade Community Church near Crossville on the beautiful Upper Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee.

StoryBooth Needs Your Help!

Here in the Southeast Conference of the UCC, we believe everyone has an important story to tell and that everyone's story matters. Our mission is to preserve and share our stories to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

You're invited to share your stories about how your local congregation, the Southeast Conference, or the United Church of Christ has made a difference in your life or the life of someone you know.

We will use these testimonies in our outreach efforts to let more folks in the South know about the wide welcome of the UCC. Some stories will also be featured as we launch our "Friends of the Conference" initiative.

Please contact Don Harris at dharris@secucc.org if you're interested in participating.

From our Generosity Coordinator

by Min. Carrole Moss

Greetings all,

Another Annual Meeting planned and executed successfully. All in attendance enjoyed it immensely!! A huge note of thanks to all for the planning, those in attendance both in person and online. It keeps getting better and better.

Now, we are ready for General Synod being held in Indianapolis, IN. Traveling mercies to all!

We are in the midst of our OCWM (Our Churches Wider Mission) giving, Friends of the Conference, and Capital Campaign giving. You may contribute to any and all of these initiatives at any time.



We appreciate all the ways that you continue to represent and support the United Church of Christ. Without YOU and your gifts we would not be able to remain viable and visible. THANK YOU ALL..YOU ARE LOVED AND APPRECIATED!! Let us remember to continue to pray for each other..we need each other in our thoughts and prayers.

"We are United in spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all and seek justice for all."

Blessings and peace...as we continue to JOURNEY, TOGETHER,
Carrole



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2023. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of June 4

- Virginia Highland Church; Atlanta, Georgia
- Members in Discernment and Persons in Exploration
- Vaughn Crowe Tipton
- Adrian Boone
- Ray Speller

Week of June 11

- Union UCC; Tougaloo, Mississippi
- Dorinda Broadnax

- John Gill
- Jean Norton
- Katie O'Dunne

Week of June 18

- Midway Congregational UCC; Midway, Georgia
- Brenda Green
- Dorothy Owen
- Brice Thomas

Week of June 25

- Evergreen Congregational UCC; Beachton, Georgia
- Leslie Brogan
- Shannon Michael Pater
- Jessica Derise
- Merianna Harrelson

Prayer Concerns

Two UCC pastors and long-time residents of Uplands Village and Pleasant Hill Community Church died recently. We hold their families and the PHCC church in prayer at this time.

- **Rev. Dick Disseler** died Sunday morning June 11th. Dick came to Uplands in 1996 with his wife Eloise. Rev. Disseler held standing with the Florida Conference.
- **Rev. Don Inglis** died Monday morning June 12th. Don came to Uplands in 1998 with his wife Grace. Rev. Inglis held standing with the Tolland Association of the Southern New England Conference.

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville TN; Deer Lodge Congregational Church, Deer Lodge TN; Brookemeade Congregational, Nashville TN; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; First Congregational Christian, Montgomery AL; Open Table UCC, Mobile AL; Howard Congregational, Nashville TN; Community Congregational, Montgomery AL.

News from the Wider Church



34th General Synod is June 30 – July 4, 2023

The Southeast Conference will be well represented at General Synod. In addition to Conference Minister Kim Wood and Moderator Richard Barham, the following delegation will be attending:

- ivy tillman (United Church, Huntsville, AL)
- Grant Carodine (Spirit of the Cross, Huntsville, AL)
- Joseph Thornton (Community Congregational, Montgomery AL)
- Rev. Eddie Colf (Brookmeade Congregational, Nashville TN)
- Tommy Hill Jr (Evergreen Congregational, Thomasville GA)
- Casey Moran (Sankofa UCC, Atlanta, GA)

Our own ACM Rev. Heather Fosburgh will be serving in an official role as the Floor Parliamentarian.

If you are attending Synod (and are not part of our official delegation) please let us know so we can invite you to special events with the Conference.



UCC leaders call on Georgia officials to stop prosecution of Atlanta activists

by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published on Jun 7, 2023

United Church of Christ leaders, in [a letter to Georgia law enforcement](#), are condemning the prosecution of Atlanta activists trying to stop the construction of a multi-million dollar police training center that has been called "[Cop City](#)."

Last week, [three Atlanta bail fund organizers](#), who have assisted people arrested while protesting the city's planned training center, were themselves taken into custody. This follows the arrests of more than 40 others who have been [charged with domestic terrorism](#) for actions protesting the project.

The UCC national officers joined Southeast Conference Minister the Rev. Kimberly Wood in the letter, speaking out against the charges that they say "run counter to broadly shared values for people of faith and conscience."

The church leaders call for Georgia officials to "immediately stop the prosecution against the three bail fund organizers from the Atlanta Solidarity Fund and the more than 40 persons facing domestic terrorism charges for their activism in seeking to protect the Weelaunee Forest."

Read the rest of the [article on the UCC website](#).

CISA and FBI Release "Protecting Places of Worship:

Six Steps to Enhance Security Against Targeted Violence" Fact Sheet

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released a new resource titled [Protecting Places of Worship: Six Steps to Enhance Security Against Targeted Violence Fact Sheet](#). This resource outlines actions that faith-based organizations and community leaders can take to increase security, focusing on six overarching steps. The product details how taking these six steps can help protect places of worship against potential threats of targeted violence in a cost-effective manner that maintains an open and welcoming environment. The product also provides training, exercise, and grant resources, and interagency contact points to assist places of worship with protecting their places of worship, obtaining funds for security improvements, and recognizing/reporting potential threats in their areas.

This product is part of CISA's and the FBI's ongoing commitment to give Places of worship the tools they need to increase their physical security. These products include a [security self-assessment](#) and the Protecting Houses of Worship [Video](#) resource that is currently translated into Spanish, Chinese Simplified and Traditional, and American Sign Language. To find out more about the Department of Justice Protecting Places of Worship Program visit justice.gov/file/1376571/download, and for Hate Crimes Prevention and Enforcement resources visit [United States Department of Justice-Hate Crimes](#).

For more information and to access this fact sheet, visit [Protecting Places of Worship: Six Steps to Enhance Security Against Targeted Violence | CISA](#)

Trainings, Conferences & Events



Do you need Boundaries Training this year? In the Southeast Conference, all Authorized Ministers who do not hold Exempt Status are required to take Healthy Boundaries training once every four years, including retired clergy. We have two regular trainings coming up. Please sign up today if you need to take one of these training offerings:

- **Healthy Boundaries 201: Beyond Basics and Into the Digital World**
August 18, 2023, 1:45 – 5:15 pm ET (Part 1)
AND August 19, 2023, 8:45 am – 12:15 pm ET (Part 2)

Both sessions required

Register by August 11, 2023

An advanced discussion of healthy boundaries for clergy and church leaders, designed for those who have completed Healthy Boundaries 101 or a similar foundational course. This workshop builds on the basics and applies boundary principles to specific situations with particular emphasis on digital technology and social media. Register and pay for this workshop [here](#). Please note: Healthy Boundaries 201 and Healthy Boundaries 301 can be taken in any order, as long as the participant has completed Healthy Boundaries 101 or an equivalent foundational workshop.

- **Healthy Boundaries 101: Fundamentals**
November 3, 2023, 1:45 – 5:15 pm ET (Part 1)
AND November 4, 2023, 8:45 am – 12:15 pm ET (Part 2)

Both sessions required

Register by October 25, 2023

An introductory workshop in healthy boundaries with an emphasis on power and vulnerability and including discussions on transference, friendships, dating, and self-care. This is the foundational Healthy Boundaries workshop which is a prerequisite to either Healthy

Boundaries 201 or Healthy Boundaries 301. Register and pay for this workshop [here](#). The Fee is \$75. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rev. Heather Fosburgh at hfosburgh@secucc.org or call 404-719-6572.

We will also be offering another Retired Training on Zoom later this fall. If none of these trainings work, you can take a Boundary Training with any other UCC Conference or Association. The trainings being offered by other conferences we are aware of are listed here at the bottom of the page: <https://www.secucc.org/news-and-events/healthy-boundaries-workshops/>.



Date: October 9-11 (with optional Sunday arrival)

Theme: The Church as it Was > Is > Could Be

Presenter: The Rev. Phiwa [pronounced PEE-wah] Langeni (D.Min.), who currently works at the Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data (CARDD) office as the UCC's first Ambassador for Innovation & Engagement.

Registration: Contact Jared Greer, Reservations Manager at Blowing Rock Conference Center @ jared@brccenter.org or by calling him at (828) 295-7813.

More Details: <https://www.secucc.org/news-and-events/retired-ucc-servants-retreat/>

Conference Calendar

June 19

[Office Closed for Juneteenth Holiday](#)

June 20 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

June 30 - July 4

[UCC 34th General Synod](#)

August 1 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

August 8 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

August 15 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

August 18 - August 19

[Board of Directors Retreat](#)

View the full calendar of events online: <https://www.secucc.org/events/>

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Kim Wood**; kwood@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh**; hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss**; cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris**; dharris@secucc.org

Copyright © 2023 Southeast Conference, UCC, All rights reserved.